

# **BOKO HARAM INSURGENCY IN NIGERIA: AN EXAMINATION OF ITS CONTRIBUTORY FACTORS, ACTIVITIES AND ISLAMIC SOLUTIONS**

**By**

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## **ABSTRACT**

Islam means total submission to the Divine will of Allah (SWT) and a Muslim is the one who willingly and wholeheartedly submits to the injunctions and commandments of the Supreme Being, among which is the quest for knowledge. *Thus, the connotation of Islam is peace in all its ramifications. One of Allah's names and attributes is As Salam meaning peace. In addition, the obligatory and supererogatory prayers done by every Muslim are terminated by the word Salam i.e. peace. Under Islamic belief, this utterance should not just be a lip service but rather a sincere and inward expression. By inference therefore, the totality of the life of a Muslim should be peace between him and his Creator and Peace between him and other creatures. Allah SWT enjoins harmonious co-existence between man and other creatures, be they human beings, animal or even plants. This paper therefore, attempts to examine the contributory factors that led to the insurgency of Boko Haram in Nigeria particularly in the Northeastern region and the organization's dreadful activities since inception to date. Some possible solutions to overcome the problem from Islamic perspectives have been proffered by the paper. The researcher adopted quantitative and qualitative methods of data collection. It was discovered among other things that religious, political, ethnic and economic factors coupled with the issues of corruption were part of the major factors that led to the insurgency of Boko Haram in Nigeria. The paper proposes that rebellion of this nature can be dealt with through adopting the Islamic provisions as ordained by the Prophet Muhammad (SAW).*

## **Introduction**

Boko Haram literally means 'Western Education is Forbidden and Unlawful'. This is a name given to them by the people especially the media. According to the members of this group their organization is named [جماعة أهل السنة للدعوة والجهاد] - *Jama'atu Ahlis Sunna Lidda'awati wal Jihad* which means 'An Organization Committed to the Propagation of the Creed of Ahlus Sunnah and the Waging of Jihad'. They are mainly dominant in the Northeastern states of Nigeria with extremely little membership in Kaduna, Kano and Bauchi states. Initially Boko Haram was referred to locally as the *Taliban* due to some similarities they claimed to have with Taliban of Afghanistan.

Boko Haram being a phenomenon that has gone through various metamorphoses, this paper scrutinizes the contributory factors that led to their emergence in Nigeria. The group is considered to have extremist ideologies that prompted them to carry out various evil activities both within and outside the country. In the history of religious crises and societal violence in Nigeria, Boko Haram is the only phenomenon that caused the worst damage of properties and loss of lives within the country and beyond. There were continued bombings, killings, kidnappings and mass destruction of properties. Even the Maitatsine religious crises in Kano and Bulunkutu areas that came up in the early 1980's could not be classified alongside with Boko Haram. This greatly impacted to the socio-economic conditions of the people in the country, particularly in the Northeastern part of the country. The aim of this paper therefore is to identify and examine the factors that led to the emergence of Boko Haram and to explore their evil activities. The paper recommends that for the phenomenon of Boko Haram to come to an end, an Islamic approach must be adopted to get to the final solutions.

### **The Origin of Boko Haram**

According to Eme and Ibietan (2012) an analysis of the origin and ideology of the *Boko Haram* could be made by inference to the name of their organization - [جماعة أهل السنة للدعوة والجهاد] - *Jama'atu Ahlis Sunna Lidda'awati wal Jihad* which means 'An Organization Committed to the Propagation of the Creed of Ahlus Sunnah and the Waging of Jihad'.

The group has a strong operational base in the northeast of Nigeria. According to Ford (2014) who wrote on the Origin of Boko Haram, its founder, Mohammed Yusuf, was a dedicated fundamentalist, whose thinking was heavily influenced by Wahhabi theology. According to him, they wanted to turn Nigeria into a truly Islamic state by imposing Shari'ah law throughout the country, including imposing it on the Christian south.

In the beginning, Boko Haram was radical, but not yet violent. That changed in 2009, when Boko Haram members refused to obey the existing laws like requiring motorcycle riders to wear helmets, they attested that, that was un-Islamic. The activities of the sect have been of concern to scholars who have written various academic papers on the modus operandi of Boko Haram. Many people interpret and examine Boko Haram from various angles.

The ideology of the sect according to some people is to bring to an end the secular system of government and introduce Shari'ah law in Nigeria. This refers to a long history characteristic of Northern Nigeria and the continued radical Islamic movements in the area. However, Lister (2012) did not subscribe to the notion that the *Boko Haram* aimed at Islamizing Nigeria through the introduction of Shari'ah law. According to him, *Boko Haram* are some disgruntled youths who have been paid by unscrupulous Northern politicians to cause mayhem in the country because of their selfish ambitions.

Others viewed *Boko Haram* as a sect nurtured by some religious organizations such as the *Salafiyah* and the *Izalah* movements or that they are an offshoot of the Shi'ites, *Kalafatas* and or Maitatsine clerics. They viewed Boko Haram to be an offshoot of the foreign Islamic Organizations such as *Tanzimul al Qa'idah* in the Islamic Maghrib, ISIS and probably *al Shabaab* (Warner 2012:39).

A more acceptable view before the researcher is the view which states that the organization came into being as a result of the economic and social inequality shown to those youths that have Islamic religious background and orientation, those youths who were not opportune to undergo the so called western education. The group has its foundations in the socio-economic marginalization of the country's northern population.

### **Ethno-Religious Crises Versus Boko Haram Insurgency in Nigeria**

Nigeria has had a long and unfortunate history of ethno-religious, communal and sectarian conflicts from independence to date. For instance, there had been several occurrences of the outbreaks of bloody violence between different communities in Plateau, Kaduna, Benue, Bauchi, Kano and Zamfara states for several decades. Thousands of Nigerians have been left dead, wounded and homeless over the years due to constant religious strife pitting people of different religions against each other (Haldun and [Opeyemi 2016](#)).

Like in any society, in Nigeria, religion plays a very critical role. It is considered as a potent force in the geopolitical development of the country. According to (Haldun and [Opeyemi 2016](#)), ethno-religious conflicts have gained notoriety as the most violent crises in Nigeria. Most of these conflicts occur in the middle-belt and along the culturally borderline states of the predominantly Muslim North, and also take place between Hausa-Fulani groups and non-Muslim ethnic groups in the South (Osaghae and Suberu 2005:19). It is sometimes very difficult to mention the differences between religious and ethnic crises because the dividing line between them is slimmer than thin. Examples of such ethno-religious conflicts are the Kafanchan-Kaduna crisis that occurred in the 1980s

and 1990s, the Kaduna Shari'ah riots of 2000 and the Jos riots of 2001 (Haldun and [Opeyemi 2016](#)). Several hundred lives were lost during the Kaduna crisis of 2000 and the Jos insurrection of 2001. The crises caused violent ripple effects that spread beyond Kaduna and Jos (Haldun and [Opeyemi 2016](#)).

Other recent ethno-religious conflicts include the July 1999 conflict among the Oro cultists in Sagamu in Ogun state who claimed that the Hausa women had come outside when the cultists were outside with their gnome. The results were arguments that finally turned into a full-scale crisis. Many Yoruba and Hausa people were killed before a dusk to dawn curfew was imposed on the Sagamu town. Even as the infamy was being put under check in Sagamu, reprisal attacks continued in Kano, in Hausa city, leading to deaths and destruction of property worth billions of Naira (Haldun and [Opeyemi 2016](#)).

Another ethno-religious conflict that had far reaching impacts on the people of Nigeria was the October 2000 Lagos-Kano (Idi-Araba/Okoko-Oba) conflict which was caused by a misperception between the Hausa inhabitants and the Yoruba living in Lagos over the use of a convenience by a man from Hausa. The mayhem resulted in the death of many Yoruba. As a consequence, the Odua People Congress (a Yoruba militia) was formed and worsened the situation as the violence later spread southwards to Kano (Haldun and [Opeyemi 2016](#)).

Similarly, in September 2001, ethnic friction between the Tivs and the Jukuns in the Plateau state reached fever pitch following what came to be referred to as 'mistaken identity'. 'What this means is that some Tivs took some nineteen soldiers to be Jukuns in fake army uniform. The Tiv youths captured them and slaughtered them one by one' (Kura 2010:34-35). And then the Nigerian army embarked on devastating reprisal attacks in Zaki-Biam. According to some controversial numbers at least a hundred people died in the army attacks (Human Rights Watch 2001). Violence spread to Jos plateau especially after a Christian was appointed as a Local Council Chairman. By the time the menace was brought to a standstill, over 160 lives had been lost (Haldun and [Opeyemi 2016](#)).

The main forms of inter-religious conflicts in Nigeria are between the Muslims and the Christians. The conflicts are sometimes so intense that they have turned into wars in different parts of the country, and they range from the Kano Maitatsine crisis (1980), Bulunktu Bizarre (1982), Katsina crises (1999), Zamfara conflicts, Kaduna revolt, Bauchi crises and Sokoto (1999). More recent examples are the Benue, Jos and Kaduna crises as well as the current conflict by Boko Haram insurgency.

These are only a few examples of inter-religious conflicts in Nigeria, since not a year passes without three to four incidences of inter-religious conflicts. The insurgency became violent in 2008 even before the country could heal from previous ethno-religious conflicts (Shehu 2011:3). With regard to the numerous conflicts and the Boko Haram menace in particular, the country's stability continued to be under constant threat. Boko Haram has introduced into Nigeria's political and social life a level of insurgency never witnessed before.

### **Historical Analyses of the Activities of Boko Haram**

**2002** - The group, which may have existed since the late 1990s, organizes under the Muslim cleric Mohammed Yusuf. It is centered in Maiduguri, the capital of the northeastern state of Borno.

**December 2003** - The first known attack by Boko Haram includes roughly 200 militants, who attack multiple police stations in the state of Yobe, near the Niger border.

**July 2009** – The Boko Haram uprising begins in Bauchi and spreads to the states of Borno, Kano and Yobe. The militant group kills scores of police officers. A joint military task force responds, leaving more than 700 Boko Haram members dead and its operational mosque destroyed. The uprising ends when police capture Yusuf. His deputy, Abubakar Shekau, reportedly dies in the uprising. Yusuf later dies in police custody. Police say he is shot during an attempted escape, but Boko Haram claims it is an extrajudicial execution.

**July 2010** - Boko Haram releases a video statement in which Yusuf's deputy who allegedly died the previous year, Abubakar Shekau claimed to be the leader of the group.

**September 7, 2010** - In the state of Bauchi, 50 Boko Haram militants attack a prison, killing five people and releasing more than 700 inmates.

**May 29, 2011** - The day of Nigerian President Goodluck Jonathan's inauguration, Boko Haram detonates three IEDs near a military barracks in the city of Bauchi. At least 10 people die in the attack.

**August 26, 2011** - Boko Haram attacks the United Nations compound in Abuja. A car bomb kills 23 people and injures more than 75 others.

**November 4, 2011** - More than 100 people die in multiple attacks in Yobe, Damaturu and Borno states. Boko Haram militants utilize IEDs and vehicle-borne IEDs to target security forces and their offices, markets and 11 churches.

**January 2012** - A newly formed splinter group, known as Ansaru, announces Abu Usmatul Al-Ansari as its leader.

**January 20, 2012** - More than 200 people are killed when Boko Haram launches coordinated attacks targeting police, military, a prison and other targets in the city of Kano in Kano State.

**February 19, 2013** - Militants alleging to be Boko Haram kidnapped a French Family of seven in a national park in northern Cameroon. However, the affiliation with Boko Haram cannot be verified. The family is later released.

**April 2013** - Jonathan states he has appointed a team to explore the possibility of amnesty for Islamist militants. Shekau responds in an audio statement: "Surprisingly the Nigerian government is talking about granting us amnesty. What wrong have we done? On the contrary, it is we that should grant you pardon."

**April 19, 2013** - Boko Haram battles with multinational security forces from Niger, Nigeria and Chad in the city of Baga in Borno State, leaving nearly 200 people dead, including many civilians. Shekau releases a video in May saying Boko Haram is not responsible for the civilian deaths.

**June 4, 2013** - Jonathan approves the proscription of Boko Haram and splinter group Ansaru as terrorist organizations.

**June 2013** - Boko Haram targets churches in various states on three Sundays in a row, leaving more than 50 people dead.

**August 14, 2013** - The Ministry of Defence announces the death of Boko Haram's second-in-command, Momodu Baba (known as Abu Saad).

**August 19, 2013** - Nigeria's chief army spokesperson claims Shekau may have died after an attack on June 30, but the claim is never verified.

**September 17, 2013** - Boko Haram gunmen dress in military uniforms and stage a fake checkpoint near Benisheik in Borno, burning vehicles and executing travelers, leaving at least 143 people dead.

**September 25, 2013** - A man claiming to be Shekau appears in a video and says that he is alive and well. However, his identity is not verified.

**November 13, 2013** – The US Department added Boko Haram to its list of terrorist organization

**January 26, 2014** - At least 45 are killed in a market in Kawuri in Borno after Boko Haram militants open fire.

**April 14, 2014** - Boko Haram militant kidnapped about 276 teenage girls from a boarding school in Chibok in Borno. Officials there say some of the girls were able to escape. The kidnapping sparks global outrage and the issue of Bring Back Our Girls campaign came up on social media.

**May 5, 2014** - In a video statement, a man claiming to be Shekau says, 'I abducted your girls. I will sell them in the market, by Allah ... there is market for selling humans. Allah says I should sell them. He commands me to sell. I will sell women. I sell women',

**May 13, 2014** - Hundreds of Boko Haram militant storm three villages in the state of Borno. Villagers resist killing more than 200 BOKO haram fighters.

**May 20, 2014** – Twin blast in Jos city killed 118 people at a market. Nigerian authorities describe the blasts as "terrorist activities" but decline to speculate on who might be responsible.

**May 21, 2014** - The White House announces that the US has sent 80 troops to Chad to help search for the kidnapped school girls.

**May 22, 2014** – The UN Security Council added Boko Haram to its sanction list

**June 3-4, 2014** – Hundreds of people were killed in raids by Boko Haram Islamic militants in the state of Borno, with some sources putting the death toll at 400 to 500.

**June 7-8, 2014** – Suspected Boko Haram militants kidnapped at least 20 young women over a weekend in the northeastern Nigeria village of Garkin Fulani, eight kilometers from a town where more than 200 schoolgirls were taken nearly two months earlier.

**June 18-22, 2014** - Boko Haram militant hold the village of Kummabza in Borno State as hostage for four days. They abduct more than 60 females, including children, and kill 30 men in the raid.

**July 7, 2014** - Sources say at least 57 girls kidnapped by Boko Haram last month from the Kummabza village in northern Borno state have escaped from their captors and returned to their village. Boko Haram is still believed to be holding about 200 schoolgirls abducted April 14 from a boarding school in the town of Chibok.

**July 17-20, 2014** - Boko Haram raids the Nigerian town of Dambua. By the time the raid ends, 66 residents have been killed and more than 15,000 have fled.

**October 16, 2014** - The Nigerian government announces it has reached a ceasefire agreement with the Islamist terror group that includes the promised release of more than 200 kidnapped schoolgirls.

**November 1, 2014** - In a video, the group's leader denies the Nigerian government's claim of a ceasefire.

**January 3, 2015** – A multi-day raid begun where hundreds of Boko haram gunmen seized the town of Baga and neighboring villages in northern Nigeria, as well as a multinational military base, leaving bodies scattered everywhere and as many as 2,000 people feared dead.

**March 2, 2015** - Boko Haram released a video showing the apparent beheadings of two men they suspected of being spies.

**March 7, 2015** - In an audio message purportedly from Shekau Boko Haram pledges allegiance to ISIS, the Islamic militant group which controls areas of Iraq and Syria. Boko Haram is named "*Wilayat Gharb Afriqiyyah*" which means the Islamic State of West Africa.

**March 12, 2015** - In an audio message purportedly from an ISIS spokesman, the group announces that the Caliphate has expanded to Western Africa and that ISIS leader

Abubakar al Baghdadi has accepted Boko Haram's pledge of allegiance. On the same day, ISIS blew up the Iraqi army headquarters north of Ramadi. Killing at least 40 Iraqi soldiers.

**April 25-26, 2015** – The decomposed corpses of at least 400 men, women and children were found in shallow mass graves and on the streets of Damasak in northeastern Nigeria. Due to a joint Nigerian-Chadian military operation, the town has recently been freed of Boko Haram, which seized the town in November.

**April 28-April 30, 2015** – Nigerian troops rescue about 450 women and girls in the Sambisa Forest during a military operation centered around destroying Boko Haram camps and rescuing civilians. According to the military, none of those rescued have been identified as the Chibok schoolgirls kidnapped last April.

**July 1, 2015** – Boko Haram militants raided three villages in the northeastern Nigerian state of Borno, killing at least 145 people, according to witnesses.

**September 3, 2015** - An estimated 30 people were dead and 145 injured after Boko Haram militants attack a crowded market in Kerawa, Cameroon and an infirmary near a Cameroonian military camp, according to Cameroonian military spokesman Col. Didier Badjeck.

**September 23, 2015** – 240 women and children were rescued and 43 Boko Haram militants were arrested after the Nigerian military raids camps run by the terrorist group in two villages.

**February 2016** - Boko Haram militant attacked two villages in the Northeast Nigeria killing at least 30 people. In another attack, 2 female suicide bombers killed 58 people at a Nigerian refugee camp. A suspect in the attack on the camp tells officers that she and the two suicide bombers were dispatched by Boko Haram.

**April 14, 2016** – CNN posts a video of some of the teenage girls abducted from Chibok that was sent to negotiators by their captors as a proof of life.

**May 17, 2016** - Amina Ali Nkeki, one of more than 200 Chibok schoolgirls kidnapped by Boko Haram, is the first to be freed after 2 years in captivity. Nigeria's army says she was rescued by army troops, but a witness tells CNN the girl wandered out of the Sambisa Forest in the northeast of the country along with her child and a man.

**August 3, 2016** - ISIS publication al-Naba says that Sheikh Abu Mus'ab al Barnawi is the new leader of Boko Haram. A Boko Haram insider confirms to CNN that Barnawi, the son of the group's founder -- who was killed by Nigerian security forces in 2009 -- is in fact the new leader.

**August 14, 2016** - Boko Haram released a video of some of the girls kidnapped in April 2014 and demands the release of Boko Haram fighters in exchange for the girls.

**October 13, 2016** - Boko Haram militant handed over 21 Chibok Girls to authorities after a series of negotiations with the Nigerian government. It's the first mass release of any of the more than 200 girls and women kidnapped from their school in April 2014.

**November 5, 2016** – A Chibok School girl carrying her 10 month old was found by the Nigerian army.

**January 5, 2017** - The Nigerian army says another missing Chibok girl and her six month old baby have been located during an operation to arrest suspected Boko Haram terrorists.

**January 17, 2017** – Scores of people were killed when a Nigerian fighter Jet mistakenly bombed a camp for the internally displaced during an operation in Rann against Boko Haram militants, according to Nigerian officials and the Red Cross. The Nigerian



government provides no official death toll, but humanitarian aid group Doctors Without Borders says "about 90" people died.

**May 6, 2017** - 82 Chibok girls were released after negotiations between Boko Haram and the Nigerian government.

**February 19, 2018** – A faction of Boko Haram raided the Government Girls Science and Technical College in the northeast Nigerian town of Dapchi, kidnapping 110 students of the college.

**February 19, 2018** – A Justice Ministry statement says that a Nigerian High Court has convicted 205 Boko Haram suspects for their involvement with the insurgent group, and the suspects were sentenced to jail terms ranging from three to 60 years. The court also freed 526 suspects, including minors, for lack of evidence and ordered they be sent to their state governments for "proper rehabilitation."

**March 1, 2018** - Boko Haram militants attack a displacement camp in Rann, Borno State, killing at least three Nigerian aid workers and injuring three others. Three International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) aid workers are abducted in the attack. On September 17, the ICRC says abducted aid worker Saifura Hussaini Ahmed Khorsa, 25, has been killed. Abducted midwife Hauwa Mohammed Liman was executed after a deadline for negotiations expires, the Nigerian government says on October 16.

**March 21, 2018** – Minister of Information and Culture Lai Muhammed says 104 of the girls abducted from their boarding Schools on February 19 have been released and returned to their hometown of Dapchi. Six of the Dapchi schoolgirls are still missing. Mohammed also later clarifies that two others who were kidnapped. "who are not students of the college -- a primary school boy who came to the school to sell pure water and another primary school girl," were released as well.

**April 13, 2018** - UNICEF says Boko Haram has kidnapped more than 1,000 children in Northeast since 2013.

**May 7, 2018** – **The Nigerian Army says it has rescued more than 1,000 Boko Haram captives** - mainly women and children, as well as some young men who had been forced to become Boko Haram fighters -- in Borno state. The operation, which was conducted in conjunction with Cameroonian and Nigerian troops of the Multinational Joint Task Force (MNJTF), rescued the hostages from Malamkari, Amchaka, Walasa and Gora villages of the Bama Local Government Area. (CNN Library).

## **Suicide in Islamic Perspectives**

Under this topic, the researcher solely relies on a publication produced by (Nashid Abdul-Khaaliq, 2010) as follows; Suicide is strictly forbidden along with the killing of innocents in Islam. God is the author of life and it is only He who could take life or tell human beings under what conditions a life should be taken such as in punishment for murder and spreading destruction and havoc in the land. As human beings we don't own our lives, God does! As such we don't have the authority to take it. Suicide is disrespecting God and being ungrateful for the life He has given us. God has made life sacred for human beings and all his creatures. There are many verses that describe the sacredness of life in the Qur'an. One of the verses is as follows: *Say: "Come, I will rehearse what God hath (really) prohibited you from": Join not anything as equal with Him; be good to your parents; kill not your children on a plea of want;- We provide sustenance for you and for them;- come not nigh to shameful deeds. Whether open or secret; take not life, which God hath made sacred, except by way of justice and law: thus doth He command you, that ye may learn wisdom. Qur'an (6:151)*

There are also many verses against suicide in the Qur'an. The following verses make the prohibition very clear and illustrates the punishment God bestows on those who commit suicide: *But let there be amongst you Traffic and trade by mutual good-will: Nor kill (or destroy) yourselves: for verily God hath been to you Most Merciful! If any do that in rancor and injustice,- soon shall We cast them into the Fire: And easy it is for God.* Qur'an 4:29 - 4:30. In the Judaic or Christian parts of the Bible there are NO direct injunctions against suicide. However, this is not the case in the traditions of Islam. Both Qur'an and Hadiths have direct injunctions against suicide. Sanctions are expressed in the Qur'an against self-killing as in the verse above and also in the following: God says explicitly in the Qur'an: *"And do not throw yourselves in destruction".* (2:195) Muslims also clearly understand that God is He who gives life and it is only He who can take life. The giving and taking of life is God's domain. In one verse of the Qur'an, God says; *"How can you disbelieve? Seeing that you were dead and He gave you life. Then He will give you death, then again will bring you to life (on the Day of Resurrection) and then unto Him you will return."* (2:28).

Muslims also understand that the intentional murder of human beings is forbidden in our religion. The murdering of oneself is also included in that prohibition. God says in the Qur'an regarding this: *"If a man kills a believer intentionally, his recompense is Hell, to abide therein (For ever): And the wrath and the curse of God are upon him, and a dreadful penalty is prepared for him."* (4:93)

*"...if any one slew a person - unless it be for murder or for spreading mischief in the land - it would be as if he slew the whole people: and if any one saved a life, it would be as if he saved the life of the whole people."* (5:32)

According to Qur'an, killing Muslims intentionally -- including oneself -- is one of the worst sins that a Muslim can commit carrying extremely severe punishments. It is explicitly forbidden in the Qur'an.

The Hadiths are also very clear about what happens to anyone who commits suicide.

Committing Suicide is a Major Sin: *Bukhari Volume 2, Book 23, Number 445:*

*Narrated Jundab the Prophet said, "A man was inflicted with wounds and he committed suicide, and so God said: My slave has caused death on himself hurriedly, so I forbid Paradise for him."*

*Bukhari Volume 8, Book 73, Number 73: Narrated Thabit bin Ad-Dahhak: "And if somebody commits suicide with anything in this world, he will be tortured with that very thing on the Day of Resurrection.*

*Narrated Abu Huraira: The Prophet said, "He who commits suicide by throttling shall keep on throttling himself in the Hell Fire (forever) and he who commits suicide by stabbing himself shall keep on stabbing himself in the Hell-Fire."*

From the two major sources of Islam there is strong condemnation and promises of hell fire to anyone committing suicide. Suicide is clearly prohibited in Islam.

**Islam prohibits the taking of innocent lives and the needless destruction of plants and animals**

The many statements in the Qur'an against injustice and the example of the Prophet (SAW) on numerous occasions, where he admonished his followers about taking the lives

of innocents and even destroying heedlessly plants and animals, are too prevalent for the idea of killing civilians to even be casually accepted. The idea that Believing Muslims following the Qur'an and example of the Prophet (saaw) would commit terrorist acts as in Mumbai, 9/11, Bali, London, etc is far from reality. There are two possibilities for those actions (1) either they were false flag operations done to blame Muslims and further demonize Islam and (2) actions done by so-called Muslims not following the dictates of their religion.

An example of how the Prophet (saaw) dealt with learning about the accidental death of children belonging to his enemies can shed light on the correct Muslim attitude:

There was an incident during one of the battles where children of the enemy were killed by mistake. The Prophet (saaw) was observed with tears in his eyes, in pain because of the killing of these innocent children. Some of his followers tried to sooth the Prophet by saying, "They were only the children of Kafirs (unbelievers)" The Prophet (saaw) turned to the one who spoke, and he was visibly angry, and said, " Aren't you the child of a Kafir too?"

The prophet (saaw) also said that **“Muslims should not attack anyone who is not bearing arms against us.”** Therefore the civilian population of even the enemies of Islam is safe from Muslim attacks.

Along with showing care for the civilian population of even the enemies of Muslims, the Prophet (saaw) also encouraged Muslims to show kindness towards animals and plants. There are numerous Hadiths showing the kindness of the Prophet (saaw) and his admonishment against the heedless destruction of plants and animals. The following is one example showing the treatment the Prophet (saaw) gave to a kitten:

One day Muhammad (saaw) was sitting in the shade under a tree. A kitten came and curled up on his cloak and went to sleep. When the time came for him to go, Muhammad (saaw) took his knife and cut away part of his cloak so as not to disturb the sleeping kitten.

### **Martyrdom versus Suicide**

On the other hand, martyrdom in war for self defense, protecting oneself and family, defending country, freedom, peace, etc. is praised. Martyrdom, or when one is killed -- not by their own hands but by an enemy -- in a struggle for a just cause is respected highly in Islam.

The Prophet said, "Nobody who dies and finds good from God (in the Hereafter) would wish to come back to this world even if he were given the whole world and whatever is in it, except the martyr who, on seeing the superiority of martyrdom, would like to come back to the world and get killed again (in God's Cause)." (Sahih Bukhari, 4:52:53)

The above Hadith makes it clear that a good Muslim who dies normally would find rewards greater than anything they can get from the whole world. In fact they would have no desire to come back to this world for anything. So why would a Muslim settle for suicide and incur severe punishment in hell to get 72 virgins, when they can get much more by dying normally after living a good Muslim life?

According to the Hadith only the martyr, not the one who kills himself, upon seeing the superiority of martyrdom would want to come back.

The Quran teaches (3:169): **"Do not consider those killed [while engaging] in God's cause dead. Rather, they live with their Lord, who sustains them!"** The Quranic idiom, "killed while engaging in God's cause" is a reference to martyrdom for acting on being a Muslim, whether as a persecuted and powerless individual or as a warrior fighting in defense of Islam, country, justice, freedom and peace. A Hadith in Sunan al-

Tirmidhi states that in contrast to suicide, the martyr does not even feel the pain of his death (Fada'il al-Jihad, 26:1663). He is also forgiven all his sins and has the right to intercede on behalf of his own family to enter Heaven. So, suicide is forbidden, killing of noncombatants is forbidden, but martyrdom is rewarded with entrance into heaven and, therefore, with great material rewards in the world to come.

***Prophet Muhammad (SAW) and Muslims throughout history never used suicide as a technique in war!!!***

For suicide to even be considered against military or even civilian positions as a way of fighting is a serious violation of Islamic teachings. The prohibition in Islam against suicide is very strong. But to read and listen to this world's media broadcasts about Islam, we would never know that.

If suicide was permitted in Islam there would be many examples of the Prophet (saaw) encouraging it and Muslim history would be replenished with examples of suicide as a technique in war. But there is no such history, no such examples and no such encouragement even down through the centuries from the 7th century Caliphates of the four rightly guided Imams, the Umayyad Empire, Abyssinian Empire, Ottoman Empire, Muslim Spain, Persia, the well documented Crusades, etc. The Iran/Iraq war -- in which more than a million people were killed -- went on for more than 8 years and had many bombings but no suicide bombings!

We are led to believe that while Islam strongly condemns suicide, somehow Muslims have become the best promoters of it. As a result of conflicts in Muslim countries, suddenly we have disobedient suicidal Muslims rising up all over Iraq, Palestine, Pakistan, Afghanistan, and India and in Western countries. Why weren't Muslims so pre-disposed to suicide during centuries of conflict in earlier years? What is different then than now in Islamic teachings to cause Muslim behavior to change so drastically such that we can't go one day without hearing reports about Muslim suicide bombers in the Islamic world?

Even the 9/11 attacks on the US is claimed to be done by Muslims bent on suicide. Oddly, Muslims did not become so disobedient until they came in contact with Israelis and the West. There must have been something about that contact that caused Muslims to employ a method of fighting that their Qur'an strongly condemned, the examples of the Prophet (saaw) and all pious Muslims throughout the history of Islam did not endorse, their own will to live resisted and looking at the gains versus the cost, really was not worth it. At the same time we have a media that is too eager to enlighten and spread the word about crazy Muslims killing themselves for 72 virgins. This, by the way, is not even in the Qur'an or to be found anywhere in the teachings of Islam. Could it be that media reports about Muslim suicide bombers are nothing more than fantastic myths meant to demonize Muslims? Could this all be part of a war by propaganda being waged against Muslims to pre-dispose people's minds into believing that Islam endorses suicide? The following is from the article entitled *The Myth of the Suicide Bomber* that makes this point even clearer:

Islam has been around for 1400 years. Is suicide a religio-cultural tradition? Looking only at history in the last 150 years can you point to suicide as a method of fighting the enemy? The French experience with Muslim fighters in Algeria had its bombers, but no suicide bombers. The English experience in fighting the Arabs in 1918 in Iraq was fierce, but no suicide bombers. Israel has been fighting the Palestinians since 1948, where are

the Muslim suicide bombers in those years between 1948 and 1985? If it were a religious predilection it would not have made a sudden appearance in Israel within the last twenty years. Islam is a worldwide religion, fighting battles in places far from the Palestinian conflict – before 1985 where were the Muslim suicide bombers outside of Israel?

### ***Has there been any Muslim suicide bombers?***

One may ask, are you saying that there has never been a Muslim involved suicide bombing? The question is not whether a Muslim was ever involved in a suicide bombing, but whether the numerous reports about Muslim suicide bombings true or are those reports fictional and being used as a propaganda weapon against Muslims? The references below details numerous incidents reported in mainstream media that were initially reported as suicide bombings, but on closer examination were found not to be suicide bombings. Conversely, there are numerous incidents that initially were reported as bombings in Muslim countries, only to have the reporting changed and those same incidents reported years later as suicide bombings. One very famous incident well known in the West is as follows:

In 1983 Israel invaded and occupied Lebanon. The US and France had peacekeeping forces in place near the Beirut airport. The US had a naval presence off the coast. Early one Sunday morning, simultaneously, both the French and American Marine barracks were bombed. The story was that a truck had come at high speed through a gate and exploded, killing hundreds of Marines...

Suicide was not mentioned in the original reports, in 1983, but in the twentieth anniversary reports the bombing of the US Marine barracks was said to have been done by a “suicide bomber”, and elsewhere the words “terrorist suicide bombing” were used. So by 2003 a simple bombing had become a suicide bombing. I think that change is significant.

### ***The Myth of the Suicide Bomber***

Getting involved in a case by case dispute over hundreds, possibly thousands of suicide bombing reports is not possible for us. But the cases I will present below show that when serious analysis and investigation is done, great doubts and inconsistencies are shown in those reports questioning whether or not they were indeed suicide bombings. There are many Muslims and non-Muslims who believe the numbers of actual “suicide” bombings done by Muslims are very few if any.

At this point the public is convinced of the reality of “suicide bombing”; that only Muslims are fanatical enough to commit suicide for a cause; and, perhaps most incredibly, after a 500 year hiatus (since Muslims engagement with the crusades), suddenly the Christian West has again become the target of Islam.

It is a wonderful tool for Jews who intend to foment a destructive war between Islam and Christianity. **But who is really doing the suicide bombings since there is justification to show that Muslims are not the most likely candidates?**

### ***Contributory factors that led to the emergency of Boko sect in Nigeria.***

Boko Haram insurgency was brought about by a number of factors. In Nigeria for example, like many other countries in the world, lacks a consensus on how necessary

changes and reforms are effected. This is caused by the fact that different religious and ethnic groups have varying benefits in which case some groups will have their interests met while others will not. This means that tension occurs when individuals who feel that they are deprived attempt to increase their stake of power or wealth or to alter the central beliefs, values, norms and philosophies. In Nigeria therefore, there appears to exist a contentious interaction of politics, ethnicity and religions, which has resulted in an increased sense of belonging and militancy. It is important to note that the general outcome of this is the intensification of numerous ethno-religious struggles in Nigeria. And this intensification can be seen as the main source of ongoing discrimination, subordination and domination in this country (Haldun and [Opeyemi 2016](#)).

The first important factor towards the Boko Haram insurgency in Nigeria revolves round the law requiring motorcycle riders to wear helmets and members of the group were asked to obey the law even though they were heading to grave yard where they were to bury one of their deceased in 2009. Eventually they had a clash with Nigerian Police. That led to the arrest of their several members. Later, Muhammad Yusuf was detained by Nigerian security forces and interrogated. His questioners taunted him for owning computers after he had spent years denouncing Western learning and science. After his interrogation, he was executed without trial. Other scholars mention several factors that were responsible for the emergency of Boko Haram insurgency in Nigeria. For instance, Samuel (2006), Kegley (2003) and Wardlaw (1982) cited in Boye (2013) argued that terrorism was motivated by religious extremism, perceived oppression, ethnic considerations, absence of central authority, poverty, ignorance, state sponsored terrorism and ideological orientation. Furthermore, Mu'azu (2011) argued that terrorism emerged in Nigeria because of the failure of governance, a complacent (disinterested) security regime and absence of strong culture that enable citizen to make effective demands from the rulers. He maintained that the environment in which Nigerians live and their experiences governance are likely contributory factors to the emergency of terrorism. However, more instructive factors were adduced for the emergency of Boko Haram groups by sani (2011) cited in Mu'azu (2011:18-19). According to him, Boko Haram was caused by several factors which include;

- 1) *Repressive (quash) attack against the religious group by the government in 2009.*
- 2) *The extra judicial killings of their Leader Muhammad Yusuf and others in 2009.*
- 3) *Exclusion of members of the Group by mainstream (الاتجاه السائد) Islamic groups.*
- 4) *Failure of governance in Borno and Bauchi states.*
- 5) *Federal government policy of appeasing (استرضى, لطف) militancy.*
- 6) *Inspiration from the success of the armed struggle in the Niger Delta.*
- 7) *Abject (miserable) poverty and high rate of unemployment in the northern states.*
- 8) *Proliferation (increase - تكاثر, تولد) of arms in the north east.*

- 9) *Chadian civil war and illegal immigration.*
- 10) *Disconnect between elected and appointed leaders and the people.*
- 11) *Absence of data and intelligence about individuals and organizational links with foreign groups.*
- 12) *Absence of a rehabilitation program for religious fundamentalists.*
- 13) *Indolence (laziness- كسل - خمول) and negligence of the northern states governors.*
- 14) *Misuse of security votes by states Governors.*
- 15) *Standoff (rest - وقوف - التعا د ل فى م باراة - ) in Somalia.*
- 16) *Unresolved Arab Israeli crisis.*
- 17) *Lack of true federalism. ( الفدرالية )*
- 18) *Resistance (opposition) of the political establishment to a national conference ( وطنى مؤتمر )*
- 19) *The collapse of public schools.*
- 20) *Active involvement of traditional leaders in politics.*
- 21) *Federal government increasing reliance on foreign security agencies.*
- 22) *In another overlap, Mu'azu (2011:20) also contended that, "The conspicuous ( استهلاك واضح ) consumption of the ruling elite, the culture of impunity ( حصانة - exemption ) that reigns across the land and the unconscionable recruitment of the youth into violent gangs serving political thugs ----- ( عصاة قطاع ) (طريق - سفاك), with the active backing of those in power, contribute to the security challenges Nigeria is going through".*
- 23) *The Almajri System of education also contributes especially in Barno, Yobe and Adamawa. Ethnic and religious hatred, Economic grievances and lack of political rights and in competent government were chipped in*
- 24) *The high rate of poverty, unemployment and political corruption have been blamed on the elongation of the conflict. Most of the foot soldiers of Boko Haram are youths that are frustrated because the lack employment, income and they have been disdained by politicians after being used by these politicians for their elections victory. Cook (2013); Awojobi (2014); Onuoha (2014) all assert that the youths enlisted into Boko Haram because of the prevalence of poverty in the North. The poverty profile of Nigeria that was released in 2011 by the National Bureau of Statistics (NBS) indicated that the northern region has more poor people than people in the south. Aside the killings, kidnapping and bombing of the sect, their activities constitute a hindrance to the socioeconomic development of the northeast where their operation is focused and Nigeria as a whole. Eme and Ibieta (2012). Ogochukwu (2013); Odita and Akan (2014); Ovaga (n.d.) agree with their study on the Boko Haram insurgency that the sect heinous crimes hinder socioeconomic development in Nigeria.*

### **The Islamic Solution to the Phenomenon**

The key aspect of any progress in this world is determined by justice dispensation in religious, social-cultural and political features. The Glorious Qur'an says in this direction:

" يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا كُونُوا قَوَّامِينَ بِالْقِسْطِ شُهَدَاءَ لِلَّهِ وَلَوْ عَلَىٰ أَنْفُسِكُمْ أَوِ الْوَالِدِينَ وَالْأَقْرَبِينَ ، إِنْ يَكُنْ غَنِيًّا أَوْ فَقِيرًا فَاللَّهُ أَوْلَىٰ بِهِمَا ، فَلَا تَتَّبِعُوا الْهَوَىٰ إِنْ تَعَدَّلُوا وَتَلَوْا أَوْ تَعْرَضُوا فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ كَانَ بِمَا تَعْمَلُونَ خَبِيرًا"

*O People who Believe ! Be firm in establishing justice, giving witness for Allah, even if it is harmful to yourselves or parents or relatives; whether the one you testify against is wealthy or poor, for in any case Allah has the greater right over it; then do not follow your wishes for you may stray from the truth; and if you distort testimony or turn away, then Allah is Well Aware of your deeds.*

It was reported in Khabarul Al Jaliy that the Prophet (صلى الله عليه و سلم) said that:

*The Justice it is Allah's scale on the world who ever retained it will drive him to paradise. And who left it will drive to Hell fire.*

روي في " الخبر الجلي " عن الجانب المقدس النبوي انه قال (صلى الله عليه وسلم) : العدل ميزن الله في الأرض فمن أخذ به قاده الي الجنة و من تركه قاده الي النار "

In addition, the three tiers of government should join hands to sensitize the youth and enlighten them about the importance of acquiring entrepreneurial skills even before providing employment to the teeming youths. Engagement of dialogue with any deviating and unarmed sect is very necessary before facing them military equipments and sophisticated weapons.

## Summary Major Finding

**The insurgency affects mainly the northeast, but attacks have taken place in in other states and the conflict has spilled over the Chad, Cameroon and Niger.** Insecurity has been a major dare to the Nigerian government in recent times. The actions and activities of the Islamic sect known as Boko Haram had led to enormous loss of lives and properties in the country, particularly in the Northern part of Nigeria. Some of these activities include intimidation, bombings, suicide attacks, sporadic gunfire of unarmed, blameless and innocent Nigerian citizens, burning of police stations and churches, kidnapping, raping of school girls and women. Nigeria has also been included amongst one of the terrorist countries of the world. This has serious implications for national development. Though government had made worried hard work to deal with these challenges masqueraded by terrorism and insecurity in the country but the rate of insurgency and insecurity is still disturbing

## Recommendations

From the foregoing, Islam in its nomenclature as well as its teachings coupled with practice demonstrated by the Prophet (صلى الله عليه و سلم), has not only catered for peace among its adherents , it has also laid down laudable principles for achievement of peace, security



and tranquility among the whole of humanity. Apparently, Muslims, based on the above, know full well that they should not hate or ill-treat those who disagree with them in faith, for the belief in Allah is not a monopoly of any individuals or even group.

At the initial stage of the conflict between the security forces of Nigeria and Boko Haram, the state made use of its police force in effort to check the activities of the group this led to the use of excessive force. Many factors contributed to the emergency of Boko Haram such as misuse of security, ignorance, lack of true federalism, political motive, foreign intruders, religious extremism, economic grievance, rampant mendicancy, collapse of territories, and heedless of vigilance. etc. The act of suicide bombing is strictly prohibited.

- a) Justice renaissance in all federal, states and local levels. (عد ل تجديد)  
(على اءارء مءلية)
- b) Vote down selfhood politicians. (رفض باءصوء رءال سياة أنا نية)
- c) Corruption cases court in state levels. (فساء اخلاقي قضية مءكمة)
- d) Public vigilantism (عام اءطياماء)
- e) Farming innovation. (العمل بالزاعة آءءءء)
- f) Re-backing power to traditional rulers. (اعاءة دعم قوة الى اءقلاء)  
(مسطرة)
- g) Reforming Educational system for Alamajiri (Hungarian or beggar). (اصلاء اءلءمى نظام الى المءرى اوشءان)
- h) Reforming internet access. (اصلاء ءءول الى الأاءرناء)

Similarly, the paper recommends that government should declare war on terrorism and seek support from international communities who have in the time past faced this kind of challenge and were capable to tackle it. Nigerian Military ought to be empowered further with arms to wrestle this insurgency. The government is advised to beef up security in the country to curb the threat of insecurity.

Thus, in Islam assassination, slaughtering, burning houses, destroying properties are inhuman acts and contrary to traditional practice approved by apostle of Allah in any authentic wise word saying. Hoping the reader and audience will do careful appraisal to understand the gap filled in comparing with others researchers. We have from the Qur'an the various legislation and Sunnah as the remain sources.

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